(c) Does not arise.

(d) DD Bharati telecasts atleast six hours of children progammes daily. To popularise the channel, the variety of programmes offered include adventure series, quiz contests, fine and performing arts, magazines, children news, science programmes, environmental preservation issues, etc., alongwith live interactive shows like "Meri Baat".

Discrimination on appointment of NER candidates in Prasar Bharati

532. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Prasar Bharati has acted under the influence of a lobby to deprive deserving candidates of NER by selecting persons only from outside the region against 157 posts falling vacant in NER as published in the news-item in 'Asomiya Praditin', Guwahati Edition dated 24th June, 2002;

(b) if so, whether there were only 4 candidates of NER selected against 197 vacancies during 1998 and presently none from the region against 157 vacancies belonging to NER; and

(c) if so, the remedial measures taken to remove such a well planned discrimination?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ): (a) No, Sir. The Recruitment Rules provide for direct recruitment of Engineering Assistants and this is done by inviting applications from eligible candidates on All India basis. The selection is based on merit as assessed in a written examination. There is no reservation for candidates of any particular State, in a zone.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Programmes of AIR, Trivandrum

533. SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether programmes of All India Radio, Trivandrum station were abandoned recently; and